

# The Catholic News

are pleased to be planning an excellent package to Oberammergau by coach for parishioners of The Nottingham Diocese led by Fr Simon Giles.



Fr Simon has selected a 7 Day tour to the Rhine valley and Oberammergau starting on the 6th June 2010 as follows  
 7 nights Rhine Valley & Oberammergau  
 Pick up at various points within the diocese to Calais for ferry crossing.  
 Overnight in Northern France, 2 nights at Rudesheim on the Rhine Valley, 2 nights in Oberammergau, one night in Northern France on the return journey  
 6 June £729  
 The price is based on two people sharing.

If you are interested and require further details please write to The Catholic News, Bellcourt Ltd (Oberammergau visit) P O Box 8455, Newark, Notts, NG23 5WX

## Book Review

### The Cross and the Third Reich

By John Frain. Family Publications. £19. 95

John Frain subtitled this book, "Catholic Resistance in the Nazi Era" and at first glance it might seem a well-trodden path, adding little to what is already known. But his terms of reference are wider than this; he examines every level of Catholic opposition to Hitler, particularly in Germany: the electorate, the bishops, courageous individuals, as well as Vatican diplomatic initiatives. Beginning with the question, "Why did one of the most intellectually gifted and industrious nations in the world become subjugated to an indolent, argumentative, autocratic, tedious, habitué of a Viennese doss-house?" He provides a brief introduction to the state of Germany after WWI. Then asking a related question, "What did the Church actually do?" during the period under scrutiny, he makes the interesting discovery that it did a great deal, even well before Hitler came to power in 1933. Between 1920 and 1933, the German bishops regularly warned their flocks (a third of the population) that the National Socialists (Nazis) were "totalitarian, racist, pagan and anti-Christian." This view was reflected in the 1933 elections; the Nazi vote in the heavily Catholic areas of the Rhineland and Bavaria was significantly lower than in the (Protestant) north and east. Looking at the record of the Church's pastors during this time, the author states that in 1932 there were 21,000 Catholic priests in Germany; that over 8,000 of these openly

clashed with the Reich; that several hundred were documented as having died at Nazi hands; and that there were many more, undocumented, whose heroic resistance is known only to God. Frain also explains why the view of Pius XII as either "Hitler's Pope" or at the least a moral coward is utterly baseless. Learning from his bishops that his public utterances, and the Vatican Radio broadcasts, were causing savage Nazi reprisals against the very people he was trying to protect, the Pope was forced to act largely through secret diplomatic channels involving his nuncios. Many references from Jewish historians and Allied diplomats are cited in evidence here. Having examined the conduct of the Church as a whole, the author describes the lives of some individual Catholics who were prepared to die rather than surrender to the Nazi ideology. Several of these men and women, like Bishop von Galen, the "Lion" of Munster, Maximilian Kolbe, the Polish Franciscan, Edith Stein, philosopher and later Carmelite, or Franz Jagerstatter, the Austrian farmer, are already familiar figures; others, like Fr Jaquel Bunel, Sister Restituta Kafka, Marcel Callo, Karl Leisner and Alfred Delp SJ, are less well-known. Reading Frain's brief yet compelling account of these models of heroic virtue is an inspiring testimony of courage and the Cross. Doctor Frain has had a distinguished career

in industry and education. In retirement he has put his gifts at the service of the Church in this robust and readable study. Making use of the works of secular historians such as Michael Burleigh, Sir Martin Gilbert and Sir John Keegan as well as Church archives, his book is measured and objective. It is a work of imagination as well as scholarship; the author well evokes the atmosphere of fear,

making pilgrimages to several haunting arenas of death and tramping the entire perimeter of the Birkenau concentration camp. My only (reluctant) criticism is that he has not quite mastered the intricacies of compiling an index; for instance, Michael Burleigh is puzzlingly given only two page references; I added, in pencil, a further thirteen.

Francis Phillips

## OBITUARY

### KEITH NEWTON RIP

Keith Newton died suddenly just before the end of his annual pilgrimage to Lourdes in June. To say that this caused shock to so many would be an understatement. But to Pat and his family the suddenness of his death was clearly a devastating blow. And yet when it came to his funeral, we began to realise that Our Lady had done him a great favour (though that did not lessen the pain to his family) by taking him from such a wonderful place as Lourdes and at a time when Keith had clearly used every spiritual resource during that final week of his life. Keith's was the classic lay vocation. Deeply committed to his wife and family he yet had time and gave so much of it to his own personal relationship with God in the Sacramental life of the Church and especially through his 65 years of serving at the Altar. As an extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist and as Hospital Visitor at Epinal Way Hospital, Keith had found an apostolate by which to lead so many back to the Church and to bring to others his own brand of Faith and quiet serenity. But perhaps it was as the champion and co-ordinator of the support for the Rosminian Sisters' Dispensary at Kwediboma in Tanzania that his deep faith and commitment was most evident. For more than 40 years he had sustained a continuous supply of medicines, baby clothes, blankets and other supplies which were the everyday needs of the Sisters' clients at Kwediboma. This great work will continue and will become a permanent memorial to Keith's service of Jesus and the Church. We give thanks for the witness of his life and commend him to the Lord, Who will surely greet him with the words: 'Well doie, good and faithful servant. Enter now into the joy of your Lord'

May he rest in peace.

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